

# Prepare for Hurricane Season

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U.S. Small Business Administration



Your Small Business Resource

It's never too early to start preparing for hurricane season, especially if you live or work in a vulnerable area. The U.S. Small Business Administration urges homeowners, renters and businesses to safeguard their lives and property before the storms hit.

Key steps to protecting your home or business include identifying possible hazards, developing a plan that includes escape routes, emergency phone numbers, appropriate insurance coverage, and storing important business and personal records off-site.

More preparedness tips for businesses, homeowners and renters are available on the SBA's Web site at [www.sba.gov/disaster\\_recov/prepared/getready.html](http://www.sba.gov/disaster_recov/prepared/getready.html). The federal government's preparedness Web site [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) is another helpful resource.

Some hurricane seasons are worse than others. The 2004 season, for example, caused billions of dollars in losses in Florida and 12 other states. The SBA has approved more than \$2 billion in disaster loans to about 63,000 residents and businesses affected by those hurricanes. Many property owners had damage from flooding by storm surges. Those losses were not covered by most insurance policies.

Some hurricane season preparedness tips include:

## **Have a disaster plan in place**

Find escape routes from the home or business and establish places to meet. Have on hand emergency phone numbers; business owners should designate a contact person to communicate with other employees, customers and suppliers. An out-of-state relative or friend can serve as a "family contact." Check insurance coverage. Flood damage is not usually covered by homeowner's insurance. For more information about the National Flood Insurance Program visit the Web site at [www.fema.gov/nfip](http://www.fema.gov/nfip), or call 800-427-4661.

Business owners and individuals should review their insurance policies before a storm hits. Business interruption insurance – which replaces income lost during down time caused by a covered peril – should be considered.

## **Disaster survival kit**

It should be kept in a safe, but accessible place and include a flashlight and extra batteries, battery-operated portable radio and extra batteries, a first aid kit, non-perishable packaged and canned food, water (enough to last a week), manual can opener, sturdy shoes, a basic tool kit, waterproof plastic bags, and cash.

## **Important business records**

This should be stored at an off-site location at least 50 miles away. Computer data should be saved on diskettes and stored off-site and in waterproof containers.

## **Windows**

Install storm shutters over all exposed windows and other glass surfaces in the home or business. Plywood shutters—1/2-inch marine plywood is best—can also offer protection from flying debris.

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The SBA makes low-interest loans to homeowners, renters and non-farm businesses of all sizes following a disaster declaration by the President. Homeowners may borrow up to \$200,000 to repair or replace damaged real estate. Individuals may borrow up to \$40,000 to cover losses to personal property.

Non-farm businesses and nonprofit organizations of any size may apply for up to \$1.5 million to repair or replace disaster damaged business assets and real property. Small businesses with economic losses as a direct result of a declared disaster may apply for a working-capital loan of up to \$1.5 million, even if the property was not damaged.

To learn more about the SBA's disaster assistance program and links to additional disaster preparedness tips, visit the Web site at [www.sba.gov/disaster](http://www.sba.gov/disaster).